AN EPISTLE OF A CATHOLICKE YOVNG GENTLEMAN, (Being for his Religion imprisoned.)

To his Father a Protestant.

Who commaunded him to set downe in Writing, what were the motiues that induced him to become a *Catholicke.*

Mason
AA.65.

Noli exubescere testimonium Domini nostri, neq; me vinctum eius.
Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of mee his Prisoner.
2. Timoth. cap. 1. Vers. 8.

DOWAY.
Printed with Licence.
1623.

BODLEI

AN EPISTLE OF A CATHOLICKE YOUNG GENTLEMAN, (Being for his Religion imprisoned.)

To his Father a Protestant.

Who commanded him to forbear in Writing, what were the motives that induced him to become a Catholick.

Ioh. 20. Multa quoque alia fecit Iesus coram discipulis suis, quæ non sunt scripta in libro hoc. Hæc autem scripta sunt, ut credatis quia Christus filius Dei est, et credentes vitam habeatis in nomine eius.

DOWAY.
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To the Reader.

*I No sooner had perused this short Epistle, then I had an earnest desire it might bee Published in Print, as well for that I obserued the groundes which this young Gentleman had layde downe to his Father to bee both sucsinct and Learned! as also for that I am well perswaded the promulgation thereof, would (God assisting) giue much good satisfaction to any iudicious Reader, and for that I neuer had any acquaintance with the Author, I mooued secretly a very Friend of mine (intimate with him) to perswade him (if possible) to put it to the Presse: which motion hee not onely absolutely refused, but was also infinitely displeased with the Mooner, wherefore to preuent (what in him lay) the printing and publishing of the said Epistle, he not onely refused vtterly to giue Coppies thereof, but also ecclipsed it from the view of all men. But the Father more prodigall then the Sonne himselfe, carried the Originall continually about him, making no dainty at all to shew it in St.*Pauls, *the Pawne,* Youngs *Ordinary in Corne-hill, and in many other places at his pleasure, he making it his common Table-discourse*

in Tauernes and Ordinaries: by which meanes I obtained a Coppy, which (though long after) I sent over Seas to a Friend, desiring him to cause it to bee Printed. Reade it through with good attention, and if then reape any profite thereby, forget not to render due thankes to GOD, and then in thy Prayers remember both the Author and the Publisher.

Farewell.

TO

TO THE WORSHIPFVLL HIS VERY LOVING Father *N. N.* Esquire, giue these.

Good Sir:

NVmberlesse (I may truely say) haue bin the attempts I haue made in writing vnto you, and as many in number were the obstacles which haue opposed my said attempts: The effects of some of them are to this houre to be seene (if I list to produce them to the quantity, And I doe keepe me within compasse) of at the least 24. sheetes of Paper, which I intended to your good selfe, which by that time they could be finished, I had motiues exhortatory to call them backe, and not by any meanes to send them. But yet neuertheless, to exempt my selfe from hauing any imputation of disobedience wherewith to be taxed, I haue now at the last (presuming more upon your Fatherly charity, then any other merite in my selfe) beene bolde, to present vnto you these few lines, wherein I haue deliuered

briefly, that which I had heretofore handled more at large; in the passages wherof, I haue here set you downe most prospicuously, according to your most important request, from whence haue perceeded the motiues, which caused me to abiure the Religion in practice amongst Protestants, and to assume the true, holy, and neuer erring Catholike and Orthodoxall Faith, and thereunto to adhere: Neither doe I herein goe about to perswade you, but onely to keepe correspondence with your desire and commaund, being that I finde my selfe bound in all Conscience, to performe such precepts, which you shall require at my hands, supposing them to be no way derogating to Gods honour, or to the commodity of my particular selfe, in making imminent perill of my soules shipwrack, where in a case of such a nature I am not lyable.

I am therefore an humble suter vnto you (good Sir) in that you would bee pleased so farre to fauour me, as to daine with alacrity the peruse of these fewe lines, and that with serious mature iudgement, and then I hope you will not bee so strict in censuring mee for my assumed

Religion

Religion, nor yet in blaming me for vndergoing with all patience and cheerfulnes, this long & austere time of durance: but you will rather (I hope) commiserate my estate, which howsoeuer to others it might appeare irksome and insufferable, to mee (I giue God most humble thankes) it is a greater consolation then any temporall (considering for whose sake it is) guerdon or respect the whole world is able to afoord me. And the consideration hereof, hath beene of that efficacy and power with mee, as that I am at all times readily prepared, with no lesse willingnesse, to vndergoe, not onely Imprisonment, in the most austere manner may bee imagined, but also in the seruice of so noble a Master, torture, stripes, gyues, yea the most prodigious and dolorous death the heart and capacity of man is able to inuent; For I know well enough, that whatsoeuer I doe vndergoe in this behalfe, I doe in it restore him but his owne, and am neuer able to come out of debt, albeit I had as many liues to loose, as I haue in this vile & miserable Carkasse of mine, drops of blood to shed; neither shall I herein dissent

Com that holy and reuerend Doctor and Pillet of Gods Church Saint *Bernard*, who for his sweete and delicate stile, is intituled *Mellifluus*, who saith thus; *Se totum me debeo pro me facto, quid addam iam pro me refecto: nec enim faceti refectus quam factus. In primo opere me mihi dedit, in secundo se, & vbi se dedit me mihi reddidit; Datus ergo & redditus, me pro me debeo, & bis debeo; sed quid Domino pro se retribuam, nam etsi me millies rependere possem, quid sum ad Dominum meum?* That is; *If I owe my selfe wholly for my first making, what can I adde more for my redeeming, especially seeing I was not so easily Redeemed as I was made. In the first worke hee gaue me my selfe, in the second himselfe, and when hee gaue mee himselfe, hee restored vnto mee my selfe, Therefore thus giuen and restored, I owe my selfe for my selfe, and I owe my selfe twice.* But now what I am able to repay my Lord for himselfe, for although I were able to repay my selfe a thousand times, what am I in comparison of my Lord? which beeing so, what then can bee the feare why I should not giue my selfe freely to my Creator? Sithence he hath in

Sermo de diligendo Deo.

me

me a double interest, to wit, aswell in respect of my Creation, as of my Redemption, the least of which two workes being vnualuable.

The serious considerations hereof (good Sir) haue wrought in me vnutterable effects, and such as haue caused mee hereby to settle so irremoueable an affection vpon the most Blessed Trinity, in regard of my Creation, and Redemption, as enforceth me with no small vehemency, to cry out with the Kingly Prophet, saying; *Quid retribuam Domino, pro omnibus* Psal.115. *quæ retribuit mihi? What shall I repay our Lord for all thinges which he hath giuen vnto me:* certainly when I haue done what I haue beene able, I am, *Seruus inutilis, an vnprofitable Seruant*, and *Indignus vocari filius eius, vnworthy to be called his Sonne.* Luk.17. The consideration whereof, was long before it came into my minde, for that I must not deny, but that I spent much time in a most exorbitant course of life, which I doe now from my heart repent, and desire that Gods grace may neuer more depart from me, so as I may for euer hereafter liue, as an

obedi-

obedient, & not as a rebellious Child, hauing so deare, louing, and tender, and a Father, who saith daily vnto me:

Psal.102. *Qui propitiatur omnibus iniquitatibus tuis, & qui sanat omnes infirmitates tuas, qui redimit de interitu vitam tuam, qui coronat te in misericordia, & miserationibus; qui replet in bonis desiderium tuum, &c.* That is, *Who is merciful to all thy iniquities, and who cureth all thy infirmities, who redeemed thy life from Death, who Crowneth thee in mercies and compassions, who replenisheth thy desire in good things, &c.* The remembrance of these thus skirmishing within me, haue bin impregnable, and irresistable motiues, which pressed mee to determine vppon a more morall worme, wherby to measure the square of my life: and these determinations made me thinke vpon Religion, and Religion begat Deuotion, and Deuotion brought with it a firme Resolution, which Resolution, being assisted by Almighty Gods grace, hath worne me to stand against all terrors & temptations, and which haue occasioned me to addresse these Lines vnto you, whereby I doe intend to giue you a taste,

taste, from what motiues and grounds I doe build my Faith; which if you be able to refell, I shall be very willing to beleeue, that a man may be saued in the Protestants Church, which neither Scriptures, Fathers, Counsels, or reason was euer able to make me vnderstand.

1 Haning therefore thus misspent my time, and *Quasi seruus nequam, like to an euill seruant*, consumed my younger yeares, yea the prime of my daies, in vanity and irregularity, It hath pleased Almighty God at the length to touch my heart with a due consideration of my mortality, and with some care of eternity; Insomuch as the more I seriously obserued the frailty, and absurdity of the one, the more inwardly I affected the loue, and contentment of the other, that finally I resolued to hunt after it, albeit the passages and difficulties of my life were neuer so many, resting now well perswaded, That, *Nil prodest homini si vniuersum mundum lucretur, anima vero sua detrimentum patiatur. It auaileth nothing to gaine the whole world, if a man make shipwracke of his owne Soule,* which

S. Math. 18

Ibidem 16.

which to saue hereafter, we are taught to saue heere; That is, to expose it to all afflictions & contradictions, which the world, the Diuell, or our owne sensuall appetite doe continually stirre vp against vs, For *much better it is for a man to enter into life euerlasting lame, blinde, or dismembred, then to be plunged into the bottomlesse Pit of unquenchable sulphurous Hell, with all our sences and members.*

Ibidem 5.

2 These therefore, and the like considerations incouraged me sincerely to seeke after Truth, swayed neither with feare nor fauour, but onely guided with that vnmouing Pole, whose influence had touched my heart, like vnto another Loadstone, that howsoeuer these mortall waues tossed my vnsteddy barke, the proofe of my affections euer bent that way, I could very well haue contented my selfe to follow my appetite still. But *durum est contra stimulum calcitrare, It is hard striuing against Almighty God; and dangerous to harden our hearts against his calles.* Wherefore, I yeeld my selfe, saying; *Domine quid me vis facere? What O Lord is thy pleasure I shall doe?* And here-

Act. 9.

herewith me thought, I heard this comfortable answer, viz. *Dicetur tibi quid te oporteat facere, Thou must be taught what thou must doe:* and taught I must be, sithence the knowledge I sought after, was aboue humane reach to comprehend and finde; For these tidings came out of Heauen, & *Vnigenitus qui est in sinum Patris ipse enarrabit, The onely begotten Son who is in the bosome of the Father, hee will deliuer them,* and they onely can haue them, *Cui filius voluerit reuelare, to whom it shall please the Sonne to reueale it. Nobis autem reuelauit Deus per spiritum suum, Spiritus enim omnia scrutatur, etiam profunda Dei. But vnto vs hath God reuealed it by his Spirit, for, the Spirit tryeth all thinges, yea, the profundities of God* Ioh.1. S.Math.11. 1.Cor.2. Shewing, ✝ this knowledge could come from none other but only frō him alone.

3 Thus then being desirous of this knowledge, and perceiuing it not to be humane, but Diuine, *Quemadmodum desiderat cerrus ad fontes aquarum, Looke how the heart hasteth to the Fountaines of water.* Euen so earnestly did I thirst after some certaine rule, guidance, or direction, whereby to be led or conducted, by which meanes I might attaine vnto what Psal.41.

soeuer humane industry could not aspire, and this needeth no further proofe, as being in it selfe manifest, and by the joint and mutuall consent aswell of Catholicks as of Protestants receiued. But of this Doctrine I collected further, that this rule or direction we speake of, must containe two seueral properties, to make it auaileable for the end, for which it is requited: First it must be plaine, easie, indifferently open or manifest to all, & the reason good, for it must be a direction as well to the wise, as to the simple, to the Learned, as to the ignorant, sithence all these must (before they can be saued) be instructed in this supernaturall Science, without which can be no accesse to grace, entrance into Heauen, or possibility to please that Diuine Maiesty, according as the holy Apostle teacheth vs, and therefore the Prophet foretelleth of this way, saying: *Et erit ibi semita & via, & via sancta vocabitur, &c.* And concludeth, *Hac erit vobis directa via, ita vt stulti non errent per eam.* That is, *And there shall be in that place a path, and a way, that shall be your direct way, so that fooles shall not erre in it.* The second property of this rule is, that it must be certaine

Heb. 9.

Elay 35.

taine and infallible, and the reason is, for that the knowlege of our Faith depending thereupon, must be certaine, and infallible, so as it may be no more subiect to error then truth it selfe is to falshood; the credit thereof must be greater then of an Angell of Heauen. *Licet nos* (saith St. *Paul*) *aut Angelus de Cœlo, euangelizet preterquam quod euangelizauimus vobis, anathema sit. If our selues, or an Angell from Heauen, shall Euangelize or Preach to you otherwise then wee haue Preached, accursed let him be.* For if our Faith might be subiect to rrror, then did it not rely vpon the truth of God, and then it were no diuine Faith. Againe, if in that Faith by which we are saued we might be seduced to falshood, then by falshood we might be saued, and by vntruth attaine to truth, which parradoxe is both blasphemous hnd ridiculous. Authorities of holy Scriptures, consent of venerable antiquity, and the vnanimous approbation of the vniuersall Church, I could produce for the truth of these properties; but I holde them needlesse for that in themselues they doe appeare most perspicuous, and by no Protestants which I can reade of, are they denyed, as by all Catho-

Gal. 1.

See William Perkins, pro. de fide n. 6.

Catholicks is confessed. I hauing thus farre waded, at the length I began to obserue, where this rule and direction is to be found, that by consent therof, I might be conuayed to that knowledge which so much importeth me, and therefore I doe here inquire of the Protestant, and he telleth me readily, that true it is, such a rule must guide all Christians, and is to be found in their Church, contained in their Bible, and by them tearmed the word of the Lord, and diuine Scriptures; this they say is easie, plaine, and an infallible direction to all who seeke after Heauen, and heauenly knowledge.

5 But heere I am intangled with so many difficulties, so that I am rather pusled, clouded, and encombred, then any way freed, cleared, or ascertained of any truth. First, how can it appeare vnto mee that I may be assured, that this Booke is the word of God, and of that continuance and authority whereof I speake: Wee see many workes beare Saint *Augustines* name, and others of other Fathers, which Protestants stoutly deny to bee theirs; yet

not so auncient as their Booke of Scripture must be, if it be true Scripture indeed; Heere I inquire so certaine knowledge of the Truth, that in it selfe it be plaine for all men to perceiue it, and so certaine, that it should be impossible how it could be otherwise, else (as I haue before said) it cannot guide or warrantise Diuine and infallible Faith. But I haue euer found Protestants so extreamely pusled in this point, that they know not how to extricate themselues, their Answers were so weake, different, disjoynted, and vncertaine, that at the last they haue no refuge, but to depend vpon the tradition of the Roman Church, from whence they haue their Scriptures; yea, and those traditions also they must grant to be of infallible truth and Faith, otherwise their Scriptures will not carry credite sufficient whereupon to build an infallible Faith, and yet if they graunt this, they suffocate and choake their owne cause in many essentiall, and important points of difference twixt them and Catholicks, so as this Rule ought to be deare, easie, and infallible, is no sooner looked vpon, but it is presently lost in ambiguities, doubts, and vncertainties.

6. And admit that they were able in the grounds of their Doctrine to produce any one infallible, plaine, & certaine rule, assuring me that the Booke they shew me, is the word of God, or written by such sacred Authors as they tell of, which they are neuer able to doe; yet are they presently encumbred with another difficulty, which maketh all vncertaine, which is contained in it: For in former times of a great part of this volume, the Greeke translations were many, the Latine more, of late since *Luther* began, from him, his complices, and Of-spring, the translations haue bin diuers and so different, that one condemneth another to Hell, for corrupting, falsifying, and abusing of holy Scriptures; yea *Luther* himselfe differeth in aboue 30. places (as I can easily shew) from himselfe, in seuerall translations of St. *Matheuves* Gospell, out of these into English, we haue at the least 7. or eight seuarall versions, of all which his Maiesty pronounceth there is neuer a good, and the *Geneua* be the worst of all.

See *Iohn Cal. in* Præfat. in no: test.

Zanch. lib. *de* Sanctis fol. 412. tom. 2.

Beza in resp. ad defen. Cast.

Ite *Beza* in præfat. no. test. 1556.

Car. moli in transla. no. test. par. 11. fol. 110.

Ite parte 64. 65. 66. 74. 90.

See confe. at *Hampton* Court pag. 46.

Heere I would see how the ignorant or learned, (amid such diuersity of opinions in men of knowledge in all sacred langua-

ges) can with assurance and certainty, select the true Translations from the false; that it be impossible to err herein, for if in this case there can be no infallible rule, and direction plaine and easie, for all men to vnderstand, (as I haue before deliuered) it is impossible that any man can be able to settle an infallible, and neuer erring Faith, vpon any thing contained in it, when as he is not certaine what is the true word of God, and what by Ignorance, Error, or wilfulnes is thrust in by humaine intention, and subiect to falshood.

7 Heere not onely the Ignorant is so intangled, with the Brackes and Toyles of vncertainty, and instability, so as he knoweth not which way to get out, yea findeth impossibility by his owne industry euer whilest he shall liue to cleare himselfe: But the Learned also are no lesse clouded with endlesse variety, and difference among such as are no lesse (yea more) learned then themselues, hauing no reason whereupon to relye their owne Iudgements before others, and bee so assured thereof, as that it is impossible they should be deceiued, and consequently, to frame an Article

of Diuine Faith vpon the assurance thereof. So as out of this head, this rule of onely Scriptures, hath lost not onely certainety, but perspicuity also, both which are very much behoofefull in the direction whereof I speake.

8 And heere in my vnderstanding it cannot be answered, as in the Proeme of the new Bible, those Translations say, to wit, that this diuersity is not in matters appertaining vnto Faith, but in other pointes of lesse consequence. First, that is not true, as by the inuectiues some of the Translations make against the rest doth appeare. Againe, in most pointes of Controuersies betwixt them and Catholicks, they translate places concerning those points, differently from the olde Latine receiued aboue 1000. yeares agoe in Gods Church, onely in fauour of their owne heresies and opinions, being matters of Faith; As for example, they translate for Priests, Elders; for Idols, Images, &c. I say yet further, that in so much as all matters there, is the true Word of God, and I partly finde that some part thereof is mistranslated, and that is proued by the diuersities of those Translations, dissonant each to other;

See *Calu.* vbi supra.

Iosias Symlerus in vita *Bullinger.*

There-

Therefore cannot all bee true: in regard hereof (I say) I must require a sure, certaine, and infallible Rule, by the which it may remaine vndoubted, that those errors or mistakings were in matters of Faith, as well as lesse matters, sithence I could neuer heare of any Wartanty out of Heauen, assuring these translations in matters of Faith, more than in smaller matters.

9 But admit againe, that Protestants had some sure & infallible rule, or meanes to ascertaine vs that this which they propose, or any of these, is the sincere translation of Gods word, yet are we as deeply incombred as euer, for insomuch as Gods word consisteth not in bare characters or sillables, but in the spirit and meaning of that writing, where (I pray) is that plaine and infallible Rule, which Protestants can assigne, the conduct whereof whosoe followeth, cannot possibly erre in the true meaning of holy Scripture. For without this all the rest is nothing auaileable to sustaine an infallible Faith, and an error or mistaking herein, is so pernicious and damnable, that whosoeuer is possessed therewith, cannot possibly enter Heauen. *Qui non*

 credit

St.Ioh.3. *credit iam iudicatus est, who beleeueth not a-right is already iudged.* And *sine fide impos-*
Heb.11. *sibile est placere Deo, without Faith it is im-possible to please God.* And our Faith is not grounded vpon letters, Characters, or sil-lables, but of the signification & true mea-ning of the holy Ghost vttered in them.

10 Heere againe I finde Protestants so masked, or hoodwinckt, that they know not which way to take, or what to say, as may easily appeare by the poore shifts they are put vnto, when in this matter they are by Catholickes called to accompt. And first it is a vsuall refuge of theirs to say, that the Scripture is ea-sie and plaine of it selfe, to be vnderstood of euery one without difficulty or am-biguity: But this is so apparantly con-trowlde, with the forme and matter of Scripture, and euery mans particuler ex-perience, that it plainely discouereth the weakenes and insufficiency thereof. As for the forme & stile it is repleate with Maiesty and depth, it containeth many Hebraicismes and Grecismes, which the ignorant and vnlearned doe not vnder-stand, yea, & many times the most Lear-ned doe make doubt & differ about, for that it doth containe so profound matter

aboue

aboue ordinary capacity. As the Trinity and Vnity in God, the Incarnation, Resurrection and Ascention of Christ our most B. Sauiour, together with his Priesthood, and presence in the most Blessed Eucharist, with the like, which doe inuolue great & hidden misteries, and profound difficulties, containing many seeming contradictions, which to reconcile great Clerks & holy Fathers, haue much trauailed, writing whole Bookes & large tomes therof, against *Iuliã* the Apostata, & other enemies of Christianity. *Iustinus animam* (saith St. *Augustine*) *intendere in Scripturas sacras, &c. I intended to bend my minde to holy Scriptures to see the quality of them, and beholde, I see a thing vnknowne to the proude, not open to Children, but in gate lowly, in effect lofty, and couered with mysteries, neither was I such as I could enter into it, or bowe my necke to the entrance of it,* So he. Thus did this holy Father and great Doctor finde the holy Scriptures, which Protestants make so easie & plaine, and thus doth euery mans experience teach, not only in the endles diuersity of expositions, betweene Catholicks & Sectaries, but especially between Sectaries themselues, Protestants

Lib. 3. conf. cap. 5.

with Protestants, who haue filled the world with their ianglings, and giuen testimony that they speake against their Consciences, and knowledge, when they say that the Scriptures are easie for euery one to vnderstand, else why should they spend so much time in making so many Expositions, and Commentaries, and in filling Bookes, to make that vnderstood, which euery man with so much ease doth conceiue: or why should they after all their Commentaries, leaue all controuersies of Scriptures more ambiguous then before, yea in stead of clearing all doubts, beget infinite new controuersies before vnheard of.

11 And from hence doth appeare, how poore and weake an Answer that other is which (many brought into straights) flie vnto, saying that Scriptures are made plaine by conferring one place with another; for this both Catholickes and their opposites, with all diligence doe affirme; yet agree neuer the more by this: neither are they conuinced of one Truth: St. *Paul* saith, *Iustus ex fide viuit*, The *Iust man liueth by his Faith*; and againe, *Fide purificans corda hominum*, God *by Faith purifying the hearts of men.*

Rom.1. Abacuc.2. Gal.3. Heb.10. Act.15.

And

And St. *Iames* saith, *Sicut corpus sine Spiritu mortuum est, ita & fides sine operibus mortua est*, like *as the body without the Spirit is dead, even so also Faith without workes is dead and nothing availeable.* Protestants explicate St. *Iames* by St. *Paul*; but Catholicks explaine St. *Paul* by St. *Iames*; This diuersity hath wel nigh cõtinued 100. yeares, tossed & discussed with all diligence, yet not to this day agreed vpon between them; & so the like in all other points of cõtrouersies we doe find. St. Iam. 2.

12 Moreouer I demaund whether after conference of places, such as doe infallibly finde Truth thereby, that it be impossible hauing so done to be deceiued; if you say they doe, then you will be controwled by dayly experience, as well in Protestants as in Catholicks, who after all differ as before; which could not be, if by this meanes they did infallibly finde the Truth; For *that is but one, as God is one, and Faith one*: But if you graunt all that conference of places, notwithstanding the true meaning of holy Scriptures, and consequently cannot serue for the purpose we treate of. Ephes. 4.

13 Others confesse, that conference of places cannot be sufficient in this case, but

but avow that Almighty God will enlightē the hart of euery one in particular that seeketh the knowledge of his Truth. But this seemeth vnto me the most absurd, desperate, and vnlikely shift of all vnlikelihoods: for, (as I haue said) notwithstanding this priuate Spirit, we see the diuersity dayly encreased, rather then any way diminished, which could not be if God particularly and infallibly guided euery one that heartily desired the truth: then must you shew a meane how euery one shall know or be infallibly assured that this priuate exposition is true; and all contrary to it false; and then must he shew how he commeth by that speciall guift, denyed to all that differ from him, or how we can be assured thereof, or how is this rule gebefall to all, which so many so earnestly trauailing for truth seeke after, yet attaine not vnto: this therefore so repugnant to euery mans reason & experience, seemeth only a rendezuous which men are driuen to retire vnto, hauing no better to succor or help themselues with; for mine owne part thus much I say and know, ý in sincere desire of truth I yeeld to none, I know it, the life of my soule, I preferre before all worldly treasures,

and

and as I rancke not my selfe among the Learned, so am I not the most vnlearned among the ignorant and vnlearned: yet when I peruse the holy Scriptures, I doe find them so deep, so profound, & so difficill, that I can assure my selfe of nothing, which by mine owne industry I am able to attaine vnto, much lesse find it so easie and plaine as to haue infallible assurance of what I conceiue; wherefore I must of necessity seeke that assurance else where, and take direction frõ surer knowledge then mine owne, or any my selfe can gather out of holy Scriptures: otherwise I shall fashion & molde out a very feeble and fickle Faith, & voide of all certainty. *Putasne intelligis quæ legis?* (saith St. *Philip* to the Eunuch) *Thinkest thou that thou vnderstandest what thou readest?* hauing the olde Testament in his hands. *Quomodo possum si non aliquis ostenderit mihi? How can I* (saith the Eunuch) *vnlesse some body shall shew me? Ego* (saith St. *Hierome*) *nec sactior sum hoc Eunucho, nec studiosior, &c. I am not holyer nor better studyed then this Eunuch*, and concludeth in these wordes. These things I haue briefly mentioned, to the end you may vnderstand ꝑ you cãnot enter ꝯ holy Scriptures without a guide,

Act. 8.

In Apoc 2. 5.

and

and one who ſhall ſhew thee the way.

This I finding to be moſt true, by al reaſon and experience in my ſelfe, an diligent obſeruation in others, I bent my labours and ſtudy to finde out this happy guide, which infallibly and withou danger of erring, would inſtruct me wit the true meaning of holy Scriptures. Perceiuing plainly therefore that the Proteſtants rule of Scriptures, could not ſeru for this purpoſe, I begin to examine wha aſſurãce Catholicks had for the ir belief or expoſitions, whereupon they relyed.

14 They confeſſe a plaine, eaſie an infallible rule, muſt guide in matters o Faith: they ſay moreouer that cannot be any dead or dumbe writing, be it neue ſo Sacred: for nothing can be written ſo plaine but in many clawſes or paſſages it will beare ſeuerall conſtructions; wher ſeuerall conſtructions are, there is ambiguity and doubt, and conſequently no ſuch plainneſſe and certainty as our Faith requireth; neither can that writing wher it is wreſted againſt true meaning, expound it ſelfe, or determine any controuerſie, that about the Letter or ſence thereof ſhall fortune to ariſe.

15 This rule then muſt be a liuing

rule

rule, able to expound it selfe, and vnfold such doubts which in matters of Faith shall fall out. And this I easily beleeued; for my owne reason doth dictate, that Almighty God would not vnder paine of Hell, binde all men to beleeue aright, and with a Diuine infallible beliefe, and leaue no rule, no meane, no ground open to euery one, and in it selfe infallible to establish his beliefe vpon, and resolue the doubts thereto appertaining.

16 This liuing Iudge can be no priuate man, for warranty in such we haue none; neither is there cause to expect more in one, then in another; moreouer that must needes dye and faile, and so the rule of saluation perish, and then the world to be left without meanes of accesse vnto Almighty God.

17 A temporall or ciuill Common-wealth it cannot be, for no one Cõmon-wealth or temporall Congregation hath any colour of Authority out of Heauen to chalenge that priuiledge; Againe, no one Common-wealth hath continued since Christ, but hath sufferd Change in the whole forme, yea Religion and all, and there is no cause to ascribe this secu-

nity more to one Cõmon-wealth then to another, There remaineth only an Ecclesiaticall cõmunity, to wit, the Church of Christ whereupon Catholicks doe rely, and assigne for this rule, wherein (as I doe confidently beleeue) they are not deceiued; whereunto I am induced by euident reason, by manifest and apparant authority, & continuance of experience. For the infallible Authority left in this Community, we haue the expresse Promise of Almighty God in many places of holy Scripture, for of this Church our most Blessed Sauiour saith, *Porta inferi non praualebunt aduersus eam, The Gates of Hell shall not preuaile against it. Vitia* (saith St. *Hierome*) *& peccatum &c.* He meant by these Gates, the vices, sinnes, and Doctrine of heretiques, and the same in effect say the rest of the holy Fathers. And St. *Paul* saith, that, *Ecclesia Dei viui est columna & firmamentũ veritatis, quod manifestum est in Carne, iustificatum est in spiritu, apparuit Angelis, predicatũ est gentibus, creditum est in mundo, assumptũ est in Gloria,* The *Church of the liuing God, the piller and ground of Truth, and manifestly it is a great Sacrament of piety, which was manifested in Flesh, was iustified in Spirit,*

St. Math. 16

In St. Math 16.

St. Amb. *lib. de bono mortis cap. 12.*

Epi, h. in An.

1. Tim. 3.

appea-

appeared to Angels, hath bin preached to Gentiles, is beleeued in the world, is assumed in Glory. Quia ab illa (saith St. *Ambrose*) *firmantur in veritate omnes credentes, For asmuch as from the Church all true Beleeuers are established in the Truth. Ego vobiscum sum* (saith our Sauiour) *omnibus diebus vsq; ad consummationē seculi; I am with you all dayes, euen to the consummation of the world. Qui* (saith St. *Hierome*) *vsq; ad consummationem mundi suam præsentia pollicetur, & illos ostendit, semper esse victuros, & se nunquā a credentibus esse recessurum: Who promiseth his presence vnto the end of the world, sheweth that they shall euer liue, & that himselfe will neuer depart from the faithfull.* And in another place he saith (I meane *Christ* our most blessed Sauiour) *Ego rogabo Patrē, &c. I will aske the Father and he will giue you another Paraclete, the spirit of Truth, that he may remaine with you for euer*; which could not be meant of the *Apostles* only to whom it was spokē, but of the succeeding Church whose person they beare, and was to indure to the worlds end. *Non pro eis rogo tantum* (saith our Sauiour) *I doe not onely pray for them, (meaning his Disciples) but for them also that by their word*

In 1. Ti. 3.

S. Math. 28 vlt.

In Mat. 28.

St. Ioh. 14.

S. Chrisostom 74. in Ioh.

St. Cirrian lib. 9. in Ioh.

St. Ioh. 17.

shall beleeue in mee, that they all may be one, as (the Father) in mee, and I in thee, that they also in vs may bee one, as wee also are one. And herein all holy Fathers doe assent, and plainely thus vnderstand it.

18 This promise of the holy Ghost, St. *Paul* doth plainely testifie to be fulfilled, when he saith thus; *Christus ascendens in altum, captiuã duxit captiuitate, dedit dona hominibus*, Christ *ascending on high, hee led captiuity captiue, he gaue gifts vnto men*: where after a few wordes he addeth, *Ipse dedit quosdam quidem Apostolos, &c.* he *gaue some Apostles, and some Prophets, and other some Euangelists, and other some Pastors and Doctors, to the consummation of the Saints, vnto the worke of the Ministry, vnto the edifying of the body of Christ, vntill wee meete all into the vnity of Faith, and knowledge of the Sonne of God, &c.* In these places it is euidently promised, the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the continuance of the Church, the infallibility of her Faith, the assured Doctrine of her Pastors, and Teachers, to bring her Children in *vnitatem Fidei*, into the vnity of Faith. Wee haue likewise in Scriptures expresse commaundement giuen to these Pastors that they care-

Ephes.4.

Ephes.4.

Act.20.

carefully attend vnto their Flocke, and that they are to render an accompt of their soules, which will be required at their hands, if through their default they perish. Wee on the contrary part haue the like commaund who are the Laity, to obey the Pastors, to take direction, Doctrine, and instruction, from them, as appeareth in many places of Holy writ, and that vnder paine of eternall Damnation. Wherefore that Christian who followeth the direction of this Church, and obeyeth her precepts, fulfilleth Gods Commaundements, and so consequently cannot erre, nor the Church erre in that direction.

2.Tim.4.

Ezech.33.

Heb.13.

S.Math.18.

St.August. lib.1.aduer. Iouin.

Idem Epist. ad Heliodor.

St.Cipri.de unit. Eccle.

Num.3.

For if the Church could erre in that Direction and Doctrine, then were wee bound by Gods Commaundement to imbrace error, and from hence one or two absurdities must needes arise, to wit, either that by error and falshood we might be saued, or else for obseruing Gods Commaundements, we might be damned; both which are most hereticall and apparant blasphemy.

19 When I had found that this Church had the infallible promise of Almighty God, for the integrity and certainty

trainy of her Doctrine, for her continuance vnto the end, that to her Pastors and Teachers was committed the cure of Christ his Flocke, that the said Flocke was straightly commaunded to obey them as their Spirituall guides; that very affection whereewith they desired to be of this Flocke, joyned mee to this Church, and subjected me to this guidance; that feare I had of mistaking the truth, (so needfull for the health of my soule,) made me cleave to the assurance of this Direction; where the Spirit of God is to be my direction and guide, and his lawfull Officers my instructors. Now remaineth onely for me to learne vse, where this eminent Citty of God (*Super montem posita, Placed or seated vpon an Hill,* and casting foorth splendour, *Ad dirigendos pedes in viam pacis, To direct our feete into the way of Peace,*) was to be found; and surely this Candle, which is not *Sub modio posita sed super candelabrum, Put or hidden vnder a Bushell, but set vpon a Candlestycke, Vt luceat eis qui in domo sunt, To give light vnto those that are in the House,* was easie to be discerned, and so it must bee if the promises of God were true, or his providence

St. Math. 5.

St. Luk. 1.

S. Math. 5.

sidence sufficient for the saluing of such soules, learned and vnlearned, for whom hee shed his most precious Blood, and dyed.

20 The Church of *Rome* so celebrated & knowne to the whole Christian world, carrieth onely the testimonies of this Truth. It hath knowne continuance with succession of Pastors from the beginning of Christianity vnto this day. It hath preserued the holy Scriptures from corruption, and deliuered them to posterity from hand to hand, from age to age, to these dayes wherein we liue. It hath consent & vnity of Doctrine throughout the whole world, & the same preserued throughout all Ages, notwithstanding the opposition of Heresie and Infidelity, wherewith it hath continually bin exercised. It hath preuailed against all Sects and Heresies whatsoeuer, and beate them downe as they sprung vp, different each from other (like vnto the prodigious heads of *Hydra*) at all times. It hath testimony of Miracles, whereby the better to confirme her Doctrine, recorded by

St. Vincent. *Lyrinens. aduersus proph. haereses.*

Beda *lib. de Eccles. hist.*

most venerable Fathers, and approued Histories, and annuals of all Ages. It hath Sanctity and Innocency of life and Doctrine, now sealed and crowned in the blood of the most glorious Saincts and Martyrs of Heauen, and such as our aduersaries cannot deny to be such. It hath the consent of all generall and prouinciall Counsels, that haue euer bin lawfully gathered, and approoued in all partes of the world.

Lastly, it hath Vniuersality, true Sacraments, Sacrifice, and all what euer markes the holy Fathers doe point out the true Church of Christ: by euery of these seuerall signes most easie to be proued, and in truth are manifest to him who will but peruse the Ecclesiasticall Histories of Times and Ages, which my selfe by examining finding to be most true, cannot doubt of.

Euseb. Zohamen. Dorothe. de hist. eul-

21 Finally if this be not it, on earth there is no true Church, *Christ hath deceiued vs, the Apostles deluded vs, the Fathers wronged vs, and the promises of God haue failed.* For it is most manifest, that no Congregation, or

St. Chrisf. in Hom. quadr. ad populum Antioch.

Society, no Sect, no Doctrine, hath continued from Christ downeward vnder the succession of Pastors with one and the same Sacraments, vnder one forme of Gouernment, but onely this. And albeit some Sect hath for the time seemed powerfull, as the Arrians, Pelagians, Donatists, and many others; yet were they no sooner sprouted vp, but they were scattered into innumerable diuersities among themselues, and at warres, yea, deadly fewd one against the other, and it is not vnknowne vnto your good selfe, but that *Regnum in se diuisum* must perish, if we may beleeue our most Blessed and most mercifull Redeemer, and so did they euery one in their turnes, insomuch that the memory of them had not remained, if that Catholicke Fathers in Confutations written against them had not recorded their Errors, and preserued the infamous memory of the Authors.

S. Math. 12

22 And what we doe finde true of all former Sectaries, is notorious in *Martin Luther* and his complyces, for their differences & implacable hatred,

Luther in Epist. ad Iohan Heruag.

each against other, is at large discussed in their owne Writings, to be found in almost every Booke-sellers shop. Insomuch as since Luther amongst his progeny, within one hundred yeares, there are recorded more seuerall Sects, (I may truely say Heresies) and more noueli opinions, hatched and brought into the world by their abortiue mearies, then in 1400. and odde yeares before. And common experience sheweth, that euery man being his owne carues, and Teacher, shapeth vnto himselfe a Faith out of his owne Braines.

Tispogra. Argent. Zuingl. vbi supra.

See a Treatise written by Doctor *Stapleton* called a discourse vpo the Doctrine of Protest. printed at *Louan.* 12. of Nouember 1564.

23 And thus (good Sir) I not daring to doe for the reasons aboue mentioned, and for the danger it importeth, had none other hope to saue my soule, but by committing my selfe to that guidance, where so many assured promises of Gods assistance do both inuite and warrant me, and so many infallible testimonies of his performance encourage me to the same.

24 Thus much (Sir) I haue deliuered, and these reasons I haue alleaged

ed for the better approbation of my motiues, and thus much I haue set downe; to the end you might vnder-stand that I haue not done any thing which doth sauour either of temerity or passion, but vnderly out of true zeale, and an earnest desire I haue to let you see how sollicitous I am to saue my soule, which (how sinfull soeuer it is) it hath pleased Christ our louing Sauiour, to redeeme, by the purchase hee made, disbursing his owne most precious Blood. Nordoe I in this stand vpon mine owne opinion, but vpon the Iudgement and Doctrine of the whole Church of Christ; neither haue I done this to any other purpose; but merely and purely to giue your ihpoftunity content.

25 These things I haue (I say) deliuered, and vnto them will I (God willing) adhere, vntill such time as better reason shall be giuen me. In the interim, I craue nothing but your Blessing and fauour: if you be phased still to call mee off, Gods will bee done.

Prouidentia Diuina hæreditas mea:

I must take the Diuine prouidence to be mine Inheritance, and then I shall haue iust cause to say, with that Blessed man Saint *Francis*, who when his Father had cast him off for his Intemperate and austerity of life, hee departed from his Fathers presence, reioycing, and singing, *Pater noster qui es in Cœlis*, so may I say, *Pater noster qui es in Cœlis*, for vpon earth I haue not the comfort of a Father. Wherefore that comfortable saying of the Kingly Prophet can neuer depart from my remembrance, *Quoniam pater meus & mater mea dereliquerunt me, Dominus autem assumpsit me*, *Because my Father and my Mother haue forsaken me, that our Lord hath taken me*, and the comfort thereof shall be alwayes ready to accompany me.

36 Before I was a Catholicke, my inordinate and irregular life much afflicted you, and now since I haue amended that fault, through the grace of God, and the helpe of the seauen

Ap. 1. *Golden Candlesticks*, spoken of in the *Apocalips*, which are the seauen Spirits of God, which the holy Church

doth

doth holde to bee the seauen Sacraments, all which doe promise grace *Ex opere operato*, which I haue sucked from the charitable breasts of our most holy Mother the Catholicke Church. You haue (Sir) little reason to let that Religion which reclaimed me from Vice, and hath beene the motiue to my amendment, a debt made to your greuous afflictions. Doe you desire that I should haue Saluation? then deny mee not that Faith which hath more then a morall assurance of Heauens happinesse. *Out of the Catholicke Church, (saith Saint Augustine) a man may haue all things except Saluation, he may haue Orders; hee may haue Sacraments; hee may sing Alleluia; hee may answere Amen; hee may haue the Euangelists; he may haue and Preach in the Name of the Father, and of the Sonne, and of the Holy Ghost, but hee can by no meane obtaine Saluation.* Thus wrote and taught Saint *Augustine*. And seeing I haue some of his workes by me, I will alledge you one or two places more to this purpose

Tract. in ep. cum Eremito

pose three hand in hand

[illegible] Eccl. Fund. cap. 4.

[illegible] all that I may write (saith hee) this [illegible] which I judge to be in the Catholicke Church; there are diuers other things which doe yet Instruct me (also) holdes me within the bosome of this vnity, doth bilde me the consent of Peoples, and Nations; this Authority which had their beginning by Miracles, nourished by Hope, augmented by Charity, confirmed by antiquity; an Church doth bilde me the succession of Bishops (that is of Popes) vntill this present Day, from the time of Saint Peter, to whome our Lord committed the feeding of his Sheepe, (after his Resurrection) vnto the Epistopall Dignity of this present Bishop.

Cas ni. Plant. [illegible]

And lastly, this very name Catholique, holdes mee and detaines mee in the vnity of this Church, which Name, this Church, hath always, not without cause among so many different Sects and Heresies, in such sort obtained, that although all Heretiques doe desire to be called Catholickes, yet, if a Stranger (I meane a Iew, Turke, Infidell,

sidell, but one who is not a Christian) should demaund where is the Assembly of the Catholicke Church, there is no Heretique, who dareth to assigne his Temple unto his house.

To which may very easily be added, that worthy saying of Saint *Cyprian*, *O beatam Ecclesiam nostram, quam sic honor divinus dignatur illuminare, quam in martyribus nostris gloriosis Martyrum sanguis illustrat, quæ antè in operibus fratrum candida, nunc facta est in Martyrum cruore purpurea. Floribus eius nec Lilia, nec Rosæ desunt*; That is, *O happy is our Church, whome the honour of Gods Grace doth so lighten, whome in our dayes the Glorious blood of Martyrs doth glorifie, shee was in the workes of our Brethren white before, but now shee is become in the blood of Martyrs of Purple colour, neither are Lillies nor Roses wanting to her Flowers.*

28 Thus wrote Saint *Cyprian*, treating of the Church and of the persecution thereof in *Africa*: Innumerable other places of holy Fathers could I alleadge for this purpose, but I holde

it

it not needfull. I will heere end, for feare I labouring to giue conceit in Writing vnto you, might discontent you more by my perplexity, and endeauouring to auoyde one mischiefe might happely fall into another, according to the olde Prouerbe, *Incidit in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim.*

Yet I therefore humbly craue your pardon to end, and withall intreating you no further to tase me, then I shall be ready at all times, *Dum spiritus hos reget artus* to continue.

From my Lodging endurance, this 15. day of August, being the 40. th Weeke of my Imprisonment, 1614.

Your most dutifull Sonne,

Nat. N.

A Catholicke younge gentleme